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## Selected Miscellany.

### THE PEDLER AND THE HEIRESS.

A STORY OF REAL LIFE.

BY SUSAN ANGUS WHELFLEY.

BENNETT the shade of the lofty and venerable elms that surrounded her father's dwelling sat Adelaide Stanhope, regardless of the darkness that thickened around her. She folded her shawl more closely around her form, as she felt the chilling damp of an October evening. The cheek that rested upon her hand was cold and wet with tears. She felt that she was about to commit a cruel act—to repay the tender love and fond solicitude of years by rebellion. She had promised that night to forsake the home of her childhood, the protecting care of a beloved father for what—comparatively a stranger—one that her wild fancy had converted into something worthy of her affection.

It is hardly to be wondered at, that a girl of seventeen, amid the retired and beautiful scenery by which she was surrounded, and without a female companion of her own age, should have some romance about her. It had been the misfortune of Adelaide Stanhope to lose her mother when very young. So kind a counsellor—so precious a guide she had at the age of eight been deprived of. She was the youngest of nine daughters, and the only one that survived her mother. She possessed an affectionate heart, and had her understanding been strengthened and cultivated, she would not have been now contemplating an act that she knew might break her father's heart and consume her own misery. Young as she was when she lost her mother, she had not forgotten her dying words—'Always love and obey your father; and her present blind infatuation was not proof against the upbraidings of a guilty conscience. His gray hairs, his aged form, his benignant look, like so many wandering uneasy spirits, seemed, one after another, to rise before her imagination, and, as she arose to return to her dwelling, she resolved not to encounter his look or receive his blessing that night lest her purpose should be shaken. More like the midnight cobbler than the heiress of her father's wide domain, did she steal into her dwelling, and through the dark find her way to her own chamber, where she rang the bell for her maid. As she entered with a light her first enquiry was for her father. It seemed to give her great relief when told he had gone to the library, where she knew he was always in the habit of spending an hour previous to his retiring for the night.

Adelaide Stanhope dismissed her maid and prepared to take a step that was to pierce her heart with ten thousand sorrows. She felt a thrill of horror as she heard the door close after her. Guilt made her a coward and she had to take a seat ere she could recover herself sufficiently to decide what must be done first. She took her watch from her side and laid it on the table, then loosened her dress to give room for the disturbed pulsations of her heart. Again, and again, she resolved to break her engagements, but her pride would not permit so great a sacrifice. The clock struck ten: she had but one short hour left to drop a line to her father, and to pack up the few things she intended to take with her. How could she break the intelligence of her rebellion to him? How could she tell her venerable parent that she was about to forsake him in his old age and fly to the arms of one he thought unworthy of associating with her or visiting at his house? How could she entreat forgiveness for so gross an act of rebellion? And yet she did it. The wound was inflicted in that lonely hour that gave so much anguish to her aged father.

Accidentally, Mr. Stanhope had discovered his daughter's private interviews with Edward Delancey. This young man had one evening intruded himself on the retirement of Adelaide S. and introduced himself to her. The adventure seemed rather romantic to her youthful imagination which had converted him into a perfect hero. Mr. Stanhope was very much shocked at his daughter's impudence, and forbade her ever having another interview with a person whose character she knew nothing about. She had been guilty of disobedience and was about to suffer its effects.

Adelaide Stanhope placed the seal upon the letter she had written and shuddered as she found that in five minutes she should go forth as a wanderer from her early home. She cast her eyes round her apartment and seemed to be bidding farewell to the familiar objects that met her view. In one corner stood the harp whose melting strains were so dear to her father. She arose and touched the strings, as she thought, for the last time, but they had lost all power to soothe the troubled mind. She threw her cloak around her and as she passed the mirror was shocked at her pale and death-like countenance.

The step of Adelaide Stanhope, as she passed through the long hall, was the only one that broke the silence of the dwelling at that late hour. The faithful domestics, who had grown grey in their master's service, had retired to rest. She looked more like a ghost than a human being, as she entered her father's library and laid the letter on the table. As she turned to leave the room her eye rested on the portrait of her mother. She stopped once more to gaze upon the mild benignant countenance. The lips seemed ready to speak—and her dying words, 'Always love and obey your father,' resounded in her ears. Wilfully she rushed from the room. Had she lingered another moment her resolutions would have been shaken. Had she listened to the admonitions of conscience, her purposes would not have been fulfilled.

Like one pursued by an evil spirit, Adelaide Stanhope hastened to leave her father's dwelling to fulfil her appointment with her lover. As she opened the door the wind moaned fearfully around her, and blew her hair in wild disorder about her face, and nearly extinguished her light. She stepped back into the hall and closed the door for a moment. Is it thus, she exclaimed, I go forth from the home of my childhood! Shall I ever again walk through these halls? Shall I ever hear the voice of my father pronounce my forgiveness? Scalding tears were on the cheek of Adelaide, as she closed the door after her, and its slow grating on its hinges seemed like the sepulchral voices of departed friends, reproving her for the step she was taking. Still she went on. Her slight and fragile form seemed almost to fly as she descended the sloping green bank in front of her father's house, where she had engaged to meet Edward Delancey and fly with him to his mother's, where their faith was to be pledged to each other, on the following morning. She had seen him but a few times, and then it was under circumstances calculated to deceive her. Alone and in the twilight she had listened to the artful tale of love, which had so infatuated and blinded her. He had told her of a pleasant home to which he should remove her, where she would experience a sister's love and a mother's care.

She now beheld him spring from a small boat on the shore, where it appeared he was waiting for her. Female delicacy caused Adelaide to shrink back, as he boldly approached and greeted her. 'I thought, Edward,' said she, 'you promised to bring your sister with you.' He made some slight excuse as he took her hand to place her in the boat.

She hesitated for a moment. She was dissatisfied with her self, and with him, and had she dared, would have returned home. He saw the struggle in her mind, and, catching her in his arms, hastily placed her in the boat. The next instant, it had glided around the little promontory, that hid her father's dwelling from her view. The feelings that now agitated her breast were indescribable, and, not of the most romantic nature. Reason began to reassert its throne, and no longer was her voice disregarded. Her impudence, when she found herself alone upon the water, with Edward D., at that time of the night, seemed truly astonishing, and she began almost to feel that she had no love for him. She knew that if she had any, it had not been founded on an acquaintance with the virtues of his character—but that it had been lighted up in her bosom, like some transient meteor in the firmament that might glow for an hour and then expire.

Long before the boat reached the shore, Adelaide Stanhope had drawn her slight person into the smallest compass imaginable, at the greatest distance from Edward D. She now felt it impossible to sustain a conversation with the man to whom she had pledged her faith and sacrificed the peace of her aged father. The dark blue waters were around her—and the canopy that overshadowed her head surpassed in brilliancy all that she had ever beheld. Like so many unwearied watchers appeared the stars to her imagination, as she looked forth in all their splendor from the glorious firmament they adorned. 'There,' thought she, 'is the dwelling place of my mother, and she pressed both hands upon her eyes as if unworthy to behold so pure and bright an abode.

In two short hours Adelaide S.—had been transported from her own home to that of her intended husband. There was no carriage in waiting to receive her, as she had anticipated. She was forced to walk through the long narrow lane that led to the low roofed cottage she was to enter, and as she as-

cended the steps she felt that she had been transported to a strange and most unlooked for abode.

Edward Delancey feared he might lose the bird he had snared, as he opened the door for her admittance, so utterly changed did Adelaide Stanhope appear. He ushered her in to what he called the parlor, where a small lamp was burning on the hearth. The room had a cold and cheerless appearance. Its sanded floor and white-washed chimney place, filled with withering heather, instead of a cheerful fire, on a cold midnight in October, seemed ominous of a rather cheerless residence.

Adelaide drew her cloak close around her and burst into tears. In her wildest fancy she had never pictured to herself a home like this. She had read of love in a cottage, but thought from such a dwelling as this, it must be an exile forever. Instantly, in imagination, was the comparison drawn between her father's richly furnished apartments and what she now beheld. A few chairs, a table and a small rug before it—were all the apartment contained. No sooner was the comparison made than Adelaide Stanhope, with her lover full in view, (who now seemed to her corrected fancy extremely plain, awkward and repulsive,) resolved, ere fell the shades of another night, to seek her father's forgiveness and a shelter beneath his roof.

Not a word had the lovers spoken since they entered the dwelling. A haughty frown seemed to rest upon the brow of the young man, as he fixed his bold penetrating eye on the pale face of the confiding female he considered perfectly within his power, and whose wealth he longed to possess.

'Adelaide,' said he, at last, 'you seem to be disappointed. But you know you have money enough to procure a better home for us if you wish, and when the old gentleman forgives you, as he must, all will be sure to go right.'

Adelaide Stanhope fixed her dark eye upon the speaker, and was about to answer his remark with the contempt it merited, when the door opened, and an awkward-looking female entered rubbing her eyes. Her appearance was in perfect keeping with all that Adelaide had seen since she had entered the house. Tall, thin, and forbidding, she seemed a fitting inmate of that dwelling.

'Why, Nat!—I mean Edward,' said she, 'you haven't even asked the young woman to take off her bonnet. Will you hand it to me, miss?'

'I will not trouble you,' said Adelaide, as she laid it on the nearest chair.

'I feel very much fatigued,' she added, turning to the woman whom she had discovered was the lady of the mansion—the mother of the young gentleman she had called 'Nat,'—and I should be glad to retire.'

'You must wait a few moments,' said she, rising to leave the room—and I will show you where to go.'

As the door closed upon her, Nat Waters (the real name of our hero) drew near to Adelaide, and as he attempted to take her hand, said:

'At what hour in the morning, sweet Adelaide, shall our happiness be consummated?'

She shrank from his touch as she would have done from that of a viper. She feared to give the words utterance that struggled in her breast, for she now knew she was completely in the power of a villain. After hesitating a moment, she said—'Wait until the morning comes, and then I will decide.'

She unconsciously arose from her chair, as if to widen the distance between them, when he followed, and placing himself before her, said—'Adelaide, you promised, beneath the roof of your father's house to be mine, and at 8 o'clock I shall await you at the altar.'

Fortunately for Adelaide, Mrs. Waters now opened the door, and said she was ready to go with her. She immediately followed, not knowing whither. After ascending a narrow creaking pair of stairs, she entered a room similar in size to the one she had just left, and equally desolate in appearance. But her eyes rested upon a bed where she might lay her aching head, and there was something of consolation to her now in that.

Having closed and locked the door, she threw herself on the bed—not to rest—for too busy was reflection in her bosom at that lonely hour. The fruit of disobedience and rebellion against filial duty, she found most terribly bitter. Not one spark of affection could she discover in her heart for the man for whom she had sacrificed so much. She was shocked at the romantic infatuation she had been under, and the manner in which her credulity had been deceived. Now, the whole truth was before her. What would be the result she knew not, one thing, however, she resolved to do, and that was, to die before she would become the wife of Nat Waters.

We shall leave her now in the retirement of her chamber to her own reflections, and return to the dwelling of her father.

Long ere Adelaide Stanhope had laid her head upon her pillow, her father's house had become the scene of wild confusion. The domestics were awakened at midnight by the ringing of Mr. Stanhope's chamber bell. One after another, with a frightened aspect,

entered to know what was the matter. They found him extremely ill, and calling for his daughter and a physician. The physician soon arrived, but where was the daughter to obey the summons of her sick father? One messenger after another had been sent for her, until the Doctor was left alone with Mr. S., but none returned to tell the tale that she was missing.

Not one of those aged domestics could bear the sad tidings to their master, and they had gathered together, a melancholy frightened group, around the kitchen fire, to await the next summons.

Soon the steps of the physician were heard descending the stairs, so impatient had Mr. Stanhope become to see his daughter.

When the truth was revealed to him he hastened to the room of Adelaide, hoping to find some communication from her. His search was vain. He then entered the library, when the letter addressed to her father met his eye. Suspecting what it might contain, he opened it and read the tale of her rebellion and sad departure from duty.

Dr. Wilbur felt greatly shocked at the conduct of Adelaide, and dreaded the effect it might have on his patient. But there was little time for reflection. He communicated the facts to those faithful domestics, and dispatched them in different directions in search of their young mistress, and then returned to the chamber of Mr. Stanhope, to break the intelligence to him as carefully as possible. When he entered, he found that he had dropped into a quiet sleep, which he hoped might be prolonged until some intelligence should arrive about his daughter.

As the clock struck five, Mr. S. awoke. After anxiously looking around the room, he asked for Adelaide.

With the greatest care Dr. Wilbur communicated to Mr. Stanhope the step his daughter had taken, and then read the letter to him. The old gentleman pressed his hands upon his throbbing temples, and burst into tears. Dr. Wilbur did all in his power to soothe his patient, but in vain. The agitation of his mind greatly increased the fever that was raging in his system, and before eight o'clock he was so delirious that it was with great difficulty he could be kept in his bed.

Upon inquiry it was ascertained that a young man by the name of Nat Waters, who had for the past year been a pedler, and was known by one of Mr. S.'s neighbors, had been seen by him the past evening at an early hour, in the costume of a gentleman, lingering near the grounds of Mr. Stanhope. This, with the intelligence that Adelaide's maid communicated, of her young mistress being out until a late hour the past evening, led her friends to believe she had become the dupe of a person she supposed to be a gentleman. They resolved immediately to cross the river and visit his dwelling, not doubting she had been dreadfully deceived.

It was impossible for Adelaide Stanhope to forget in sleep, the danger her imprudence had been the means of bringing her into. So faithful was conscience in its reproofs—and so few charms had her present dwelling to offer, that she felt she was completely cured of romance—and no longer desired to be a heroine. Deeply did she lament the hours she had wasted in reading the novels that had so contaminated her mind. The sober realities of life now appeared in their true light—and she would have given worlds if this page in her history could have been forever blotted out. She had just risen and tied on her hat, resolved, if possible, to leave the house without seeing the man she now perfectly hated, when she heard a loud knocking at the street door. The next instant she was in the room below, and in the presence of friends that would have died in her defence.

'Take me to my father!' she exclaimed, as she rushed from the house with the speed of lightning. Nat Waters who stood in the middle of the room, did not attempt to impede her course. He appeared perfectly stunned, so suddenly had he lost the fortune, and the bride, he considered within his grasp!

In a few moments Adelaide Stanhope was again seated in a light skiff that was rapidly bearing her over the waves. As she passed the little promontory that concealed her own dear home from view, and saw its white front peeping through the lofty elms that surrounded it, she exclaimed—'My father! my father!! Oh, live for the sake of your wretched child!'

Dr. Wilbur was well satisfied there was no cordial he could administer, that would be so composing to Mr. Stanhope, as the presence of his daughter. When told that Adelaide had safely arrived, he became comparatively calm, and requested to see her.

Three times Adelaide S.—had to sit down upon the stairs, and give way to her grief, before reaching her father's room. The door was opened by an aged female who had been her nurse in infancy. Adelaide closed her eyes as she passed, to shut out her calm reproving look. The next instant she was in the presence of her father, and on her knees before him. Not a word had been uttered by either—loud sobs proclaimed her penitence,—and the hand of her father, as he laid it upon her brow, told his forgiveness. 'Rise, my child,' he at last said, 'and receive

my blessing.' As Adelaide rose, the blessing of her father fell upon her ear. It sounded like the message of mercy to the dying. It spoke of pardon, and of peace.

Adelaide now became the gentle, watchful nurse of her aged parent. Her hand alone smoothed his couch, and administered the refreshing draught. By night, and by day, she lingered near his couch, and was blessed by seeing returning health visit his wan cheek.

His thin gray hairs never appeared so sacred in her sight, as they did now, as she parted them from off his lofty venerable brow—and she felt it would be far better to die, than ever inflict another pang upon his heart.

No harsh reproaches from her father had fallen on Adelaide's ear. Not a word of what had passed: he saw her distress and remorse, and forbore to add one drop to her cup of sorrow.

Most salutary was the lesson Adelaide Stanhope had so dearly learnt. She felt its influence in all her after life.

When settled happily, years after the events I have related, she would laughingly repeat to her children her adventure with the pedler. And it is a remarkable fact that not one of her daughters had the least spice of romance about them, and although their mother retained and lived on the patrimonial estate of her ancestors, the shade of the lofty elms that surrounded the dwelling, had little charms for them—and generally in their walks they avoided the scene of their mother's early exploits.

## REPORT OF POST-MASTER GENERAL.

POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT, NOV. 30, 1839.  
Sir: The Post roads of the United States covered by mail service on the 30th day of June last, were, as nearly as can be ascertained, 133,999 miles in extent. The rate of annual transportation on that day was about 34,496,878 miles and its cost \$3,262,622, viz:

Miles.	
By horse and Sulky	11,447,147 \$364,569
By stage and coach	19,633,676 1,900,451
By steamboat & railroad	3,396,055 520,602

Total 34,496,878 \$3,285,622

This is exclusive of transportation by steamboats and other vessels, under the 5th and 6th sections of the act of 1825, which costs about \$16,300 more.

The number of post offices this day is 13,028.

The number of mail contractors in service during the last year, was about 1,825.—Of this number, 483 have been fined, or had deductions made from their pay, for sundry delinquencies. The aggregate of fines is \$58,733.62, and of deductions \$22,066.04, excluding remissions, the whole amounting to \$79,803.63.

A great majority of the contractors have performed the service with the most exemplary punctuality.

The revenue of the Department for the year ending the 30th June, 1838,

was	\$4,237,075 97
The expenditures were	4,621,837 16

Excess of expenditures 386,759 19

This excess was made up by surplus funds of preceding years.

The revenue of the year ending 30th of June last, was \$4,476,636 56

The engagements and liabilities of the Department for the same year, were 4,624,117 66 Excess of engagements and liabilities \$147,479 30

The surplus still on hand has prevented embarrassment.

The cash on hand according to the latest reports of the post masters, is \$206,701 95! There is also remaining in banks \$33,453 73 of which only \$2,903 03 is available.

Compared with the preceding year, the revenue has increased about 24 per cent, and the aggregate increase was \$341,560 29.

When it is extensively inculcated as a principle, that the public money, instead of being retained for the public service, ought to be made use of in private operations, it is not surprising that some of the postmasters, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of the Department to prevent it, should practise upon the precept. Nothing is likely to make them all duly sensible of the heinousness of the offence but an act of Congress, declaring it to be a crime, punishable according to the magnitude of the sum thus applied.

The postmaster then states that the maximum allowed by law to be paid to R. Road Co's is \$300 per mile—of the refusal of the P. W. B. R. R. Co., to accept that sum and of a similar difficulty with the proprietors of the New York, and Boston transportation Company.

Great difficulty is found in bringing to justice mail robbers in some cases, on account of the inadequacy of the present laws to secure the attendance of distant witnesses.—The compensation allowed them is not sufficient to pay their expenses, without reference to the value of their time.

The radical change in the rates of postage on letters, recently adopted in Great Britain, has attracted much attention in the United States.